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National Park Service Strategic Plan
Final Draft
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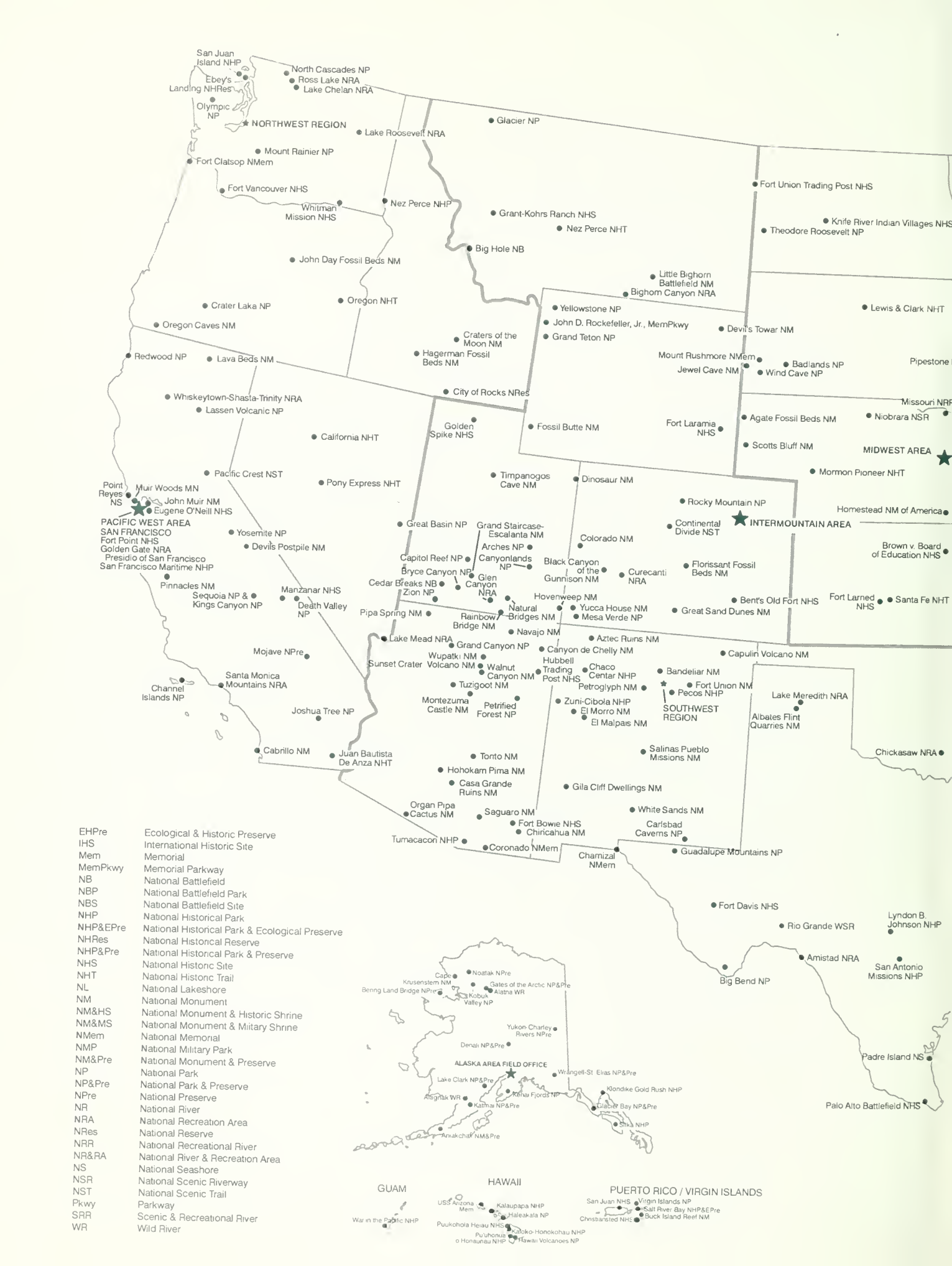
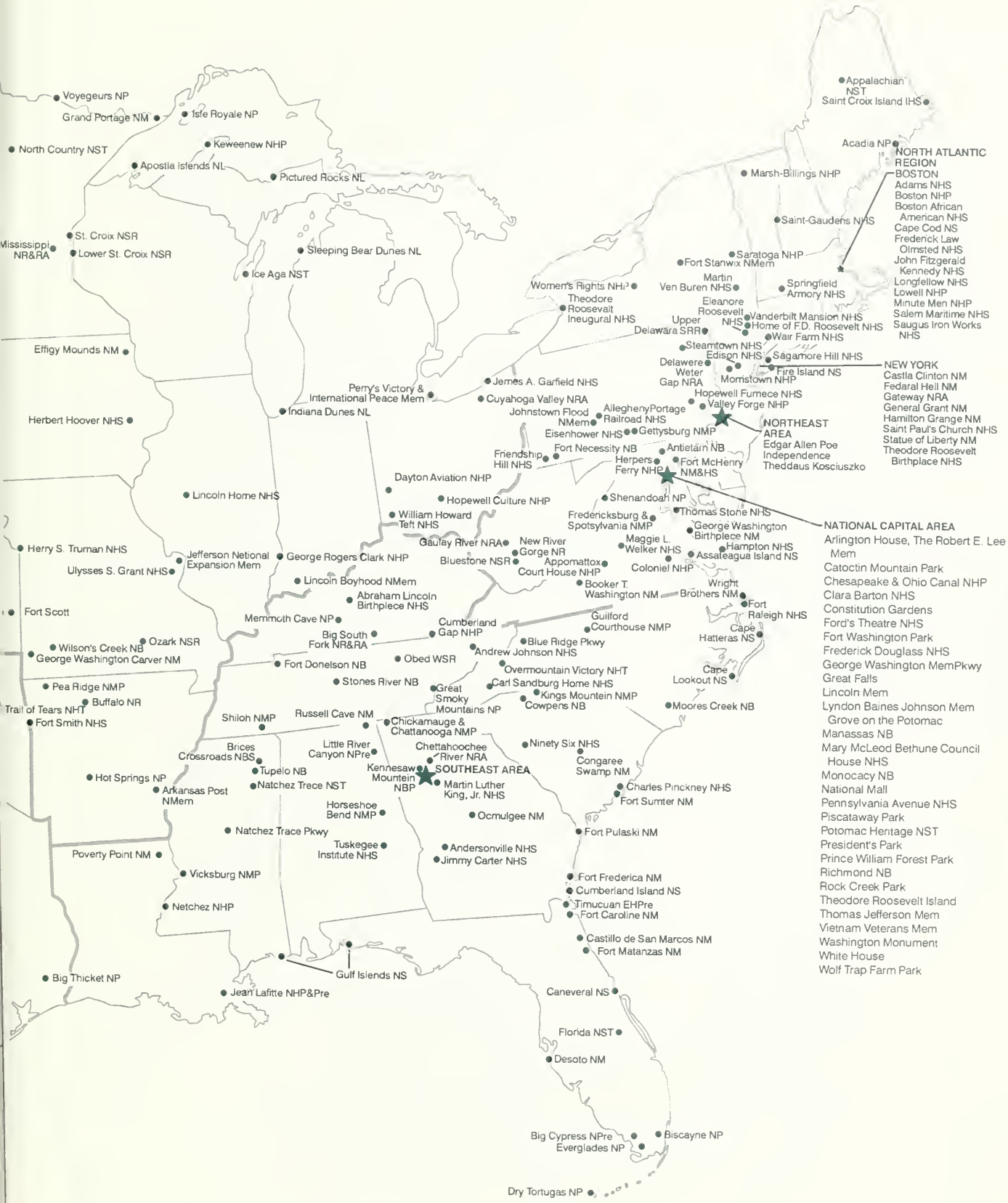


EHPre	Ecological & Historic Preserve
IHS	International Historic Site
Mem	Memorial
MemPkwy	Memorial Parkway
NB	National Battlefield
NBP	National Battlefield Park
NBS	National Battlefield Site
NHP	National Historical Park
NHP&EPre	National Historical Park & Ecological Preserve
NHRes	National Historical Reserve
NHP&Pre	National Historical Park & Preserve
NHS	National Historic Site
NHT	National Historic Trail
NL	National Lakeshore
NM	National Monument
NM&HS	National Monument & Historic Shrine
NM&MS	National Monument & Military Shrine
NMem	National Memorial
NMP	National Military Park
NM&Pre	National Monument & Preserve
NP	National Park
NP&Pre	National Park & Preserve
NPre	National Preserve
NR	National River
NRA	National Recreation Area
NRes	National Reserve
NRR	National Recreational River
NR&RA	National River & Recreation Area
NS	National Seashore
NSR	National Scenic Riverway
NST	National Scenic Trail
Pkwy	Parkway
SRR	Scenic & Recreational River
WR	Wild River


Voyegeurs NP
Grand Portage NM
Isle Royale NP
North Country NST
Keweenew NHP
Apostle Islands NL
Pictured Rocks NL
Mississippi NR&RA
St. Croix NSR
Lower St. Croix NSR
Sleeping Bear Dunes NL
Ice Aga NST
Effigy Mounds NM
Herbert Hoover NHS
Indiana Dunes NL
Lincoln Home NHS
Herry S. Truman NHS
Ulysses S. Grant NHS
Jefferson National Expansion Mem
George Rogers Clark NHP
Lincoln Boyhood NMem
Abraham Lincoln Birthplace NHS
Fort Scott
Memmoth Cave NP
Wilson's Creek NB
Ozark NSR
George Washington Carver NM
Pea Ridge NMP
Buffalo NR
Trail of Tears NHT
Fort Smith NHS
Fort Donelson NB
Stones River NB
Shiloh NMP
Russell Cave NM
Brices Crossroads NBS
Tupelo NB
Natchez Trece NST
Hot Springs NP
Arkansas Post NMem
Horseshoe Bend NMP
Natchez Trace Pkwy
Poverty Point NM
Tuskegee Institute NHS
Vicksburg NMP
Netchez NHP
Big Thicket NP
Jean Lafitte NHP&Pre
Gulf Islands NS
Dry Tortugas NP
Everglades NP
Big Cypress NPre
Biscayne NP
Florida NST
Desoto NM
Caneveral NS
Andersonville NHS
Jimmy Carter NHS
Martin Luther King, Jr. NHS
Ocmulgee NM
Fort Pulaski NM
Fort Frederica NM
Cumberland Island NS
Timucuan EHPre
Fort Caroline NM
Castillo de San Marcos NM
Fort Matanzas NM
Ninety Six NHS
Congaree Swamp NM
Charles Pinckney NHS
Fort Sumter NM
Moores Creek NB
Cape Lookout NS
Cape Hatteras NS
Fort Raleigh NHS
Wright Brothers NM
Booker T. Washington NM
Guilford Courthouse NMP
Coloniel NHP
Maggie L. Welker NHS
Hampton NHS
Assateague Island NS
George Washington Birthplace NM
Thomas Stone NHS
Fredericksburg & Spotsylvania NMP
Shenandoah NP
Hopewell Culture NHP
Dayton Aviation NHP
William Howard Taft NHS
Gauley River NRA
New River Gorge NR
Bluestone NSR
Appomattox Court House NHP
Cumberland Gap NHP
Blue Ridge Pkwy
Andrew Johnson NHS
Obed WSR
Overmountain Victory NHT
Carl Sandburg Home NHS
Great Smoky Mountains NP
Kings Mountain NMP
Cowpens NB
Chickamauge & Chattanooga NMP
Chattahoochee River NRA
Kennesaw Mountain NBP
SOUTHEAST AREA
Little River Canyon NPre
Friendship Hill NHS
Fort Necessity NB
Eisenhower NHS
Johnstown Flood NMem
Allegheny Portage Railroad NHS
Gettysburg NMP
Antietam NB
Herpers Ferry NHP
Fort McHenry NM&HS
Perry's Victory & International Peace Mem
Cuyahoga Valley NRA
James A. Garfield NHS
Women's Rights NHP
Theodore Roosevelt Ineugural NHS
Delaware Weter Gap NRA
Upper Delawara SRR
Martin Ven Buren NHS
Eleanore Roosevelt NHS
Fort Stanwix NMem
Saratoga NHP
Springfield Armory NHS
Vanderbilt Mansion NHS
Home of F.D. Roosevelt NHS
Wair Farm NHS
Steamtown NHS
Edison NHS
Sagamore Hill NHS
Fire Island NS
Morristown NHP
Hopewell Furnece NHS
Valley Forge NHP
NORTHEAST AREA
Edgar Allen Poe
Independence
Theddaus Kosciuszko
Appalachian NST
Saint Croix Island IHS
Acadia NP
Marsh-Billings NHP
Saint-Gaudens NHS
NORTH ATLANTIC REGION
BOSTON
Adams NHS
Boston NHP
Boston African American NHS
Cape Cod NS
Frederick Law Olmsted NHS
John Fitzgerald Kennedy NHS
Longfellow NHS
Lowell NHP
Minute Men NHP
Salem Maritime NHS
Saugus Iron Works NHS
NEW YORK
Castla Clinton NM
Federal Hell NM
Gateway NRA
General Grant NM
Hamilton Grange NM
Saint Paul's Church NHS
Statue of Liberty NM
Theodore Roosevelt Birthplace NHS
NATIONAL CAPITAL AREA
Arlington House, The Robert E. Lee Mem
Catoctin Mountain Park
Chesapeake & Ohio Canal NHP
Clara Barton NHS
Constitution Gardens
Ford's Theatre NHS
Fort Washington Park
Frederick Douglass NHS
George Washington MemPkwy
Great Falls
Lincoln Mem
Lyndon Baines Johnson Mem Grove on the Potomac
Manassas NB
Mary McLeod Bethune Council House NHS
Monocacy NB
National Mall
Pennsylvania Avenue NHS
Piscataway Park
Potomac Heritage NST
President's Park
Prince William Forest Park
Richmond NB
Rock Creek Park
Theodore Roosevelt Island
Thomas Jefferson Mem
Vietnam Veterans Mem
Washington Monument
White House
Wolf Trap Farm Park

The Mission of the National Park Service

"The National Park Service is dedicated to conserving unimpaired the natural and cultural resources and values of the National Park System for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations. The Service is also responsible for managing a great variety of national and international programs designed to help extend the benefits of natural and cultural resource conservation and outdoor recreation throughout this country and the world."

— National Leadership Council

Introduction

In 1995 the National Park Service began actively working to comply with the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) to develop a performance management system that will be useful and used. This act requires both strategic planning and performance measurement — setting goals and reporting results. The law also sets various deadlines. Most important, the Government Performance and Results Act seeks to make the federal government more accountable to the American people in its actions and expenditures. The National Park Service, with its mandate to preserve the nation's parks and treasures, can and must demonstrate its value to the American people.

In 1995 the National Park Service established a GPRA Taskforce to integrate the requirements of the Government Performance and Results Act into its management system. This taskforce oversees the implementation of this act into NPS management and has representation from field areas, programs, the Washington Office, and many parks. Over the years the National Park Service has been involved in long-range planning. The agency's most recent strategic plan was completed in 1994, not long after the GPRA legislation was passed. The GPRA Taskforce reviewed the 1994 *NPS Strategic Plan* and determined that it did not meet all the requirements of the Government Performance and Results Act. A new effort was begun in 1995 and is presented in this *Strategic Plan.*

This document reflects the requirements of the Government Performance and Results Act and seeks to define the agency's desired future. It provides the agency's framework for strategic planning and reporting on measurable outcomes, focusing on the results achieved rather than on the efforts expended. This plan, with the mission statement, mission goals, and long-term goals, forms the basis for parks, programs, and central offices to develop their annual performance plans and their annual goals and performance measures.

The development and revision of this plan is an ongoing refinement process. By law a federal agency's strategic plan must be revised in its third and fifth years. For the National Park Service 1997 is a transition year to integrate GPRA requirements into its planning, budget, and reporting processes. It

would be helpful to have comments on how well this plan, the mission goals, and the long-term goals assisted parks, programs, and central offices in developing their individual GPRA-based annual performance plans and annual performance reports. After having used this *Strategic Plan* as the foundation piece in individual GPRA planning efforts, the NPS GPRA Taskforce needs to hear specific suggestions for improving the plan. A revised plan, incorporating responses from parks, programs, and central offices will be the next step in the process.

A Message from Director Roger Kennedy

I speak as an American proud of his country — committed to its common purposes and its common heritage. I am especially proud of the role of the National Park Service in caring for our common heritage. The watchwords of the National Park Service are patriotism, integrity, truth, and professionalism.

Eighty years ago the nation was committed to a park system — a whole system with integrity. The founders of that system — Stephen Mather and Horace Albright — insisted that it be comprised of three inextricable components: the patriotic monuments on the National Mall in Washington, D.C.; great historic sites like Independence Hall and our battlefields; and our great natural areas.

We in the National Park Service are educators, and the national park system is a great educational institution. We have 369 campuses. We try to bring the most accurate information to Americans in each of those places for a true understanding of our history, even when it is tragic. In some parks the chief truth is about our relationship to other species, including our responsibility for other species. In others we learn from archeology that there is scarcely a square mile on this continent that has not borne the brunt, or the blessings, of our willful human species. The places are real, the objects are real, the animals are real, and the stories are real. We are the custodians of what is most authentic in America.

The national park system covers more than 83 million acres. About 21,000 permanent and seasonal employees and about 80,000 volunteers carry out the peoples' business in caring for park resources and in providing for public access to the parks. More than 269 million visitors enjoyed these great American treasures in 1995 alone. Lodging, transportation, food, shops, and recreational services are provided by 659 concessioners throughout the national park system. The budget for operation of the national park system in 1996 was $1.1 billion.

Our fundamental mission is focused not only on national parks but on a national system made up of resources managed by states, federal agencies, local governments, and the private sector. We work with our many partners

in the public and private sectors to sustain and preserve this national system of natural and cultural resources and outdoor recreational opportunities. These resources, together with national parks, provide all citizens access to the richness and diversity of our national heritage.

This *Strategic Plan* for the National Park Service complies with the requirements of the Government Performance and Results Act and is based on the 1994 *NPS Strategic Plan*. This document charts the course for the National Park Service in preserving parks and toward sustaining and renewing cooperation with communities and partnership programs. It is for our generation to provide the National Park Service with the tools to do that work better — to encourage, to endorse, and to improve the ability of the American community to protect its common heritage, its common ground.

Roger G. Kennedy

National Park Service Mission Goals

The following mission goals are presented in four categories that are inclusive of NPS legislative mandates and policies. These mission goals were developed using concepts from the 1994 *NPS Strategic Plan*, contributions from members of the GPRA Taskforce, results of the NPS GPRA performance measurement workshop, and public comments received at meetings, by mail, and by questionnaire. The NPS mission goals enable the National Park Service to focus and align its activities, core processes, and resources to support mission-related outcomes and to help ensure that efforts and resources are targeted at the highest priorities.

These mission goals articulate the ideals that the National Park Service is striving to attain, and they provide the basis for long-term goals.

GOAL CATEGORY I: PRESERVE PARK RESOURCES

Mission Goal Ia: *Natural and cultural resources are protected, restored, and maintained in good condition.*

This goal includes the concepts of biological and cultural diversity and the perpetuation of natural processes, and it is meant to encompass the broad mandate of the NPS organic act. Long-term goals pertaining to the protection, restoration, or maintenance of ecosystems, rare plant and animal populations, archeological and ethnographic sites, and historic structures and objects are related to this mission goal.

Mission Goal Ib: *Natural and cultural resources are managed within a broad context.*

The term broad context includes both natural ecosystems and spheres of cultural influence that extend beyond the park unit to nearby lands. For park units that share resource management concerns with other countries, broad context means appropriate international cooperation. Long-term goals that seek cooperation with neighboring land managers and promote ecosystem management are related to this mission goal.

Mission Goal Ic: *Scenic grandeur and natural and cultural landscapes are protected from disturbance and encroachment of development and, where appropriate, their wilderness character and associated values are preserved.*

The enabling legislation for various parks requires the protection of the scenic grandeur of landscapes, the perpetuation of natural processes, and the mandates of the Wilderness Act regarding wilderness values in designated or proposed wilderness. To preserve scenic grandeur in a natural area, or the integrity of a cultural landscape, external incompatible influences must be minimized. Similarly, the National Park Service must maintain wilderness attributes, such as opportunities for solitude, presence of natural quiet, and a night-sky unaffected by light or air pollution in designated or proposed wilderness. Any long-term goals dealing with external threats to natural or cultural landscapes or the perpetuation of wilderness values are related to this mission goal.

Mission Goal Id: *The National Park Service contributes to knowledge about natural and cultural resources; management decisions about resources are based on adequate scholarly and scientific information.*

This goal pertains to NPS contributions of scholarly and scientific research to academic and park-associated communities. It maintains that park resource information increases society's understanding of its heritage and contributes to the general knowledge of the population. To meet this goal, park managers must routinely use the results of scholarly and scientific research and consultation with park-associated communities to determine how a proposed action or activity will affect park resources. Long-term goals that focus on physical research in the parks or archival research related to resources, along with performance measures that link research data to decision making, are supported by this mission goal.

GOAL CATEGORY II: PROVIDE FOR THE PUBLIC ENJOYMENT AND VISITOR EXPERIENCE OF PARKS

Mission Goal IIa: *Visitors safely enjoy and are satisfied with the availability, accessibility, diversity, and quality of park facilities, services, and appropriate recreational opportunities.*

Safety and enjoyment are fundamental parts of the visitor experience. Visitor safety cannot be compromised. Likewise, enjoyment of the park and its resources is the desired outcome of any visit. Visitor safety and enjoyment are affected by the quality of park facilities and services, whether they are provided by the National Park Service, managed by a concessioner, or contracted. The availability of park facilities, services, and recreational opportunities has to do with convenient locations and times of operation that fit visitors' transportation and schedule needs. Accessibility for special populations visiting federal and concession-operated facilities or participating in authorized recreational activities will be accommodated, where appropriate, in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Diversity and quality of facilities and services have to do with providing a range of appropriate accommodations and recreational opportunities (at various prices and levels of expertise and interest) for park visitors who are looking for variety in their park experiences. Appropriate recreational opportunities are those that are not harmful to resources and that are consistent with a park's purpose and management philosophy.

Mission Goal IIb: *Park visitors and the general public learn and understand the purpose and significance of parks.*

Visitors' park experiences grow from enjoying the park and its resources to understanding why the park was established and what is significant about its resources. Any long-term goals that would accomplish the transition from simply enjoying the park to learning and understanding facts about its purpose and significance are related and included here. All forms of education and interpretation can be related to this mission goal.

Mission Goal IIc: *The public supports the preservation of parks and their resources for this and future generations.*

Ultimately, the outcome of satisfactory visitor experiences is public support for preserving the country's heritage as contained in the parks. This support can come in various forms. Many people contribute time and expertise as volunteers in parks, others donate money and materials, and still others promote support for parks through cooperating nongovernment organizations. Any long-term goals that focus on building or maintaining public support for parks and their resources through interpretation, education, and visitor experiences relate to this mission goal.

GOAL CATEGORY III: PERPETUATE HERITAGE RESOURCES AND ENHANCE RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES MANAGED BY PARTNERS

Heritage resources consist of both natural and cultural resources, including properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places, wild and scenic rivers, national trails, national landmarks, and heritage and recreation areas. These heritage resources are not within the boundaries of a national park or monument. They are supported by the National Park Service through partnership programs that are backed by legislation.

Mission Goal IIIa: *Heritage resources are conserved through formal partnership programs that increase support for their conservation.*

Partnerships among the federal government, states, local governments, Indian tribes, foreign governments, and private organizations and individuals will preserve significant historic and archeological resources throughout the nation. Partners include state historic preservation offices, state liaison offices, private nonprofit organizations, and foreign governments.

Mission Goal IIIb: *Through partnerships with state and local agencies and nonprofit organizations, a nationwide system of parks, open space, rivers, and trails provides recreation and conservation benefits for the American people.*

Some partnership programs assist state and local governments in developing recreational opportunities along designated rivers and trails. A goal of the National Park Service is to help meet current and projected recreation development needs within the capacity of the resource to sustain them. Assistance includes, among many things, visitor use studies and surveys, visitor experience planning, and visitor impact monitoring programs. Long-term goals dealing with assisting state or local governments to appropriately develop river and trail recreational opportunities are related to this mission goal.

Mission Goal IIIc: *Assisted through federal funds and programs, recreation resources are protected through formal mechanisms to ensure continued access for public recreational use.*

Certain partnership programs such as grants from the Land and Water Conservation Fund and the Urban Park and Recreation Recovery Program and the transfer of federal lands to parks protect recreation resources through formal mechanisms established by law. Together, these three programs have provided millions of acres and invested billions of federal matching dollars in more than 37,000 state and local parks. Under these mandates, the National Park Service and its state or local grantees have contractual obligations to prevent unauthorized conversions from agreed-upon conservation and recreational uses. This mission goal relates to annual monitoring of sites assisted under these three programs.

GOAL CATEGORY IV: ENSURE ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

Mission Goal IVa: *The National Park Service leads in sustainable practices for park operations and facility design.*

The National Park Service must use sustainable practices in the design, development, maintenance, and operations of park facilities and programs and must ensure that sustainable practices are used by concessioners and contractors. Long-term goals that focus on reducing waste, promoting recycling, producing life-of-structure maintenance estimates, minimizing impacts on air and water quality, and restoring disturbed areas are related to this mission goal.

Mission Goal IVb: *The National Park Service is a responsive, efficient, and accountable organization, with all systems integrated to enhance productivity.*

To become more responsive, efficient, and accountable, the National Park Service must integrate its planning, management, accounting, and reporting systems. Integrating these systems will provide better cross-communication during daily operations and will help the National Park Service develop required annual work plans in compliance with the Government Performance and Results Act. Modern electronic technology has made it possible to integrate these systems among the park units, central offices, and program centers. Long-term goals pertaining to organizational responsiveness, efficiency, and accountability are related to this mission goal.

Mission Goal IVc: *Employees are motivated and outcome-oriented, working together in efficient and effective ways. They are representative of the national workforce. All employees, including NPS leadership and management, are fully trained to ensure their professionalism and support for the NPS mission.*

The effectiveness of an organization depends on hard-working, motivated employees. Cultural and ethnic diversity in an organization helps it develop different outlooks and strategies in response to constantly changing influences on the work environment. All employees need training that gives

them the ability to carry out their duties in full professional competence. The training must be focused on the NPS mission and be outcome-oriented. It must promote efficiency, effectiveness, safety awareness, and teamwork in the agency. Long-term goals that focus on managerial, administrative, safety, and organizational training are related to this mission goal.

Mission Goal IVd: *Partnerships, volunteers, grants, and donations, with or from other agencies and organizations, increase NPS managerial ability.*

The National Park Service seeks to pursue maximum public benefit through contracts, cooperative agreements, contributions, and other alternative approaches to support park operations. This concept includes nongovernment organizations such as friends groups, foundations, cooperating associations, and concessioners. It is not, however, limited in that respect. Local, state, and federal government organizations already assist in improving NPS managerial ability through partnerships and cooperative agreements. Long-term goals that deal with park management strategies and funding sources carried out in cooperation with other government and nongovernment organizations and private donors are related to this mission goal.

National Park Service Long-Term Goals

The long-term goals presented below are part of a series of servicewide goals that respond to the Government Performance and Results Act. These goals bridge mission goals to annual goals. Parallel goals are being developed at the park, program, and central office levels. Unlike the mission goals, which articulate the ideals that the National Park Service is striving to attain, these long-term goals help establish performance measures and help develop reporting methods. Annual goals that flow from long-term goals will be described in the National Park Service's annual performance plan.

The development of NPS mission goals and long-term goals used a field-oriented approach that sought to have personnel from the field units contribute the bulk of the information and ideas. This approach ensured that the linkage of the goals is logical and hierarchical and that there is a clear picture of what the National Park Service must accomplish to meet its mandates. The long-term goals were developed under the assumption that funding will continue at the current levels. It is obvious that adequate staffing and funding must support these goals for them to be effective.

The NPS long-term goals reflect the collective vision and desired outcomes of the National Park Service — parks, programs, field areas, the Washington program staff, as well as the National Leadership Council. Underlying the development of these goals is the critical assumption that during the next six years financial resources will remain essentially at current year levels in constant dollar terms. As the National Park Service strives to fulfill its mission and ensure that resource allocations and decisions reflect results-oriented performance, these long-term goals represent the subjects that the National Park Service intends to measure as appropriate for each park, to aggregate, and to report upward to the national level as documentation of its accomplishments.

GOAL CATEGORY I: PRESERVE PARK RESOURCES

Mission Goal Ia: *Natural and cultural resources are protected, restored, and maintained in good condition.*

1. By 2002, 10% of disturbed lands in parks that have been targeted for restoration in resource plans prior to 1997 are restored (total number of acres of disturbed land for which an approved general management plan, resource management plan, or action plan calls for restoration efforts).

2. By 2002, 25% of the park's listed threatened and endangered species populations have an improved status, and 50% of listed species have stable populations.

3. By 2002 the number of violations of national ambient air quality standards per park and the number of reductions in visibility per class I park is reduced by 10%.

4. By 2002 the number of days recreational waters fail to meet water quality standards for recreation is reduced by 10%.

5. By 2002, 50% of all historic structures on the List of Classified Structures are in good condition.

6. By 2002, 40% of park museum collections are preserved, protected, and used consistent with professional standards.

7. By 2002 the number of reported incidents of looting or vandalism of archeological sites is reduced by 10%.

Mission Goal Ib: *Natural and cultural resources are managed within a broad context.*

1. By 2002, 60% of all parks have formally identified the cultural groups relevant to park management and have developed programs and/or agreements with those groups.

2. By 2002, 50% of the inventory and monitoring parks have developed a GIS-based conceptual model of the park and its surrounding ecosystem.

3. By 2002, 50% of all parks have documented the major external impacts on park resources and developed cooperative mechanisms for mitigating such impacts.

4. By 2002, 100% of major NPS planning efforts, including international assistance, incorporate appropriate ecosystem management strategies into the development of alternatives and agency proposed actions.

Mission Goal Ic: *Scenic grandeur and natural and cultural landscapes are protected from disturbance and encroachment of development and, where appropriate, their wilderness character and associated values are preserved.*

1. By 2002, 50% of all cultural landscapes on the Cultural Landscapes Inventory are in good condition.

2. By 2002, 50% of park units that have designated wilderness within their boundaries are implementing approved wilderness management plans.

Mission Goal Id: *The National Park Service contributes to knowledge about natural and cultural resources; management decisions about resources are based on adequate scholarly and scientific information.*

1. By 2002, 19% of the outstanding data sets identified in 1997 of basic natural resource inventory needs for all parks are acquired or created.

2. By 2002, 10% of each kind of cultural resource is inventoried and evaluated to current standards and national register criteria.

3. By 2002, 50% of all NPS research is made available to the public.

GOAL CATEGORY II: PROVIDE FOR THE PUBLIC ENJOYMENT AND VISITOR EXPERIENCES OF PARKS

Mission Goal IIa: *Visitors safely enjoy and are satisfied with the availability, accessibility, diversity, and quality of park facilities, services, and appropriate recreational opportunities.*

1. By 2002, 85% of visitors are satisfied with the availability, accessibility, and quality of park facilities and services.

2. By 2002 visitor and employee safety incidents are reduced by 10%.

3. By 2002, 75% of facilities (including quarters) and services are in compliance with health and safety standards.

Mission Goal IIb: *Park visitors and the general public learn and understand the purpose and significance of parks.*

1. By 2002, 60% of park visitors understand the purpose and significance of the park they are visiting.

2. By 2002, 50% of schoolchildren who attend park-sponsored interpretive and educational programs demonstrate knowledge of park resources.

Mission Goal IIc: *The public supports the preservation of parks and their resources for this and future generations.*

As yet, no servicewide long-term goals have been articulated for this mission goal. Parks, programs, and central offices may develop their own long-term goals and annual goals to meet this mission goal in their performance plans.

GOAL CATEGORY III: PERPETUATE HERITAGE RESOURCES AND ENHANCE RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES MANAGED BY PARTNERS

Mission Goal IIIa: *Heritage resources are conserved through formal partnership programs that increase support for their conservation.*

1. By 2002 the number of significant historic and archeological properties identified, evaluated, documented, or officially designated at local, state, tribal, or national levels is increased by 25%.

2. By 2002 the number of significant historic and archeological properties protected nationwide through local, state, or tribal statutory, regulatory, or financial incentives or by the private sector is increased by 27%.

3. By 2002 a projected increase of 130% in requests for information and assistance on the appropriate protection of significant historic and archeological properties is met.

Mission Goal IIIb: *Through partnerships with state and local agencies and nonprofit organizations, a nationwide system of parks, open space, rivers, and trails provides recreation and conservation benefits for the American people.*

1. By 2002, 1,100 additional miles of trails, 1,200 additional miles of protected river corridors, and 35,000 additional acres of parks and open space are established with NPS partnership assistance.

2. By 2002, 250 additional American communities, assisted through NPS partnership efforts, enjoy recreation and conservation benefits on lands and waters.

3. By 2002, the National Park Service works with 500 grassroots conservation organizations on various partnership projects.

Mission Goal IIIc: *Assisted through federal funds and programs, the protection of recreation resources is achieved through formal mechanisms to ensure continued access for public recreational use.*

1. By 2002, 37,500 state and local parks assisted through federal grants and land transfers are protected and remain available for public recreation.

GOAL CATEGORY IV: ENSURE ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

Mission Goal IVa: *The National Park Service leads in sustainable practices for park operations and facility design.*

1. By 2002, 100% of new NPS facility design and construction projects employ sustainable practices.

2. By 2002, 85% of park operations use sustainable practices (e.g., energy and water conservation techniques).

Mission Goal IVb: *The National Park Service is a responsive, efficient, and accountable organization, with all systems integrated to enhance productivity.*

1. By 2002, 100% of major NPS data systems are integrated so that 75% of employees are able to readily access needed information, and 80% of the information added to servicewide databases is entered only once.

2. By 2002, zero material weaknesses are identified in the National Park Service.

Mission Goal IVc: *Employees are motivated and outcome-oriented, working together in efficient and effective ways. They are representative of the national workforce. All employees, including NPS leadership and management, are fully trained to ensure their professionalism and support for the NPS mission.*

1. By 2002, 100% of employee performance appraisals are tied to outcomes in the strategic and annual performance plans.

2. By 2002, 80% of NPS employees have professional certification by PATCO categories.

3. By 2002 the percentage of protected classes employed and retained by the National Park Service matches the percentages of national workforce measures in each PATCO category.

Mission Goal IVd: *Partnerships, volunteers, grants, and donations, with or from other agencies and organizations, increases the NPS managerial ability.*

1. By 2002, 95% of national park units have integrated partnerships into their management.

2. By 2002 the National Park Service annually receives over 3 million hours of volunteer support, valued at $40 million in donated services, to support its mission.

3. By 2002 the National Park Service annually receives $40 million in nonappropriated funds to support its mission.

The Challenges

The National Park Service faces several challenges associated with resource preservation, visitation, operations, and budget. The National Park Service must address these challenges if it is to achieve its mission and goals. The following essays provide a background for understanding some of the complex problems that the National Park Service faces and how its mission and goals are interrelated.

The Role of the National Park Service in Preserving America's Legacy of Natural and Cultural Resources

When the first forest reserves and national parks were being established in the 1800s, few Americans were concerned about what was going to happen to the nation's spectacular natural resources in the wake of progress. To meet the ever-growing needs of the population, forests were logged, mountains were mined, and rivers were dammed. In areas that were once wild, the presence of people displaced or reduced animal populations and eliminated some species altogether, and greatly altered vegetation.

Automobiles and other types of transportation and services make it easy and desirable for people to visit national parks and other scenic areas. Easy access has created a complicated issue: how to adequately protect and preserve park and heritage resources while providing a safe and enjoyable experience for visitors.

The limited, and often overburdened, NPS workforce provides many emergency and nonemergency services, including search and rescue, law enforcement, interpretation, education, and public relations. As a result, less time is devoted to resource protection. Also, the national park system has been expanding, but budget increases and the number of employees have not grown proportionately. Easy access, combined with a limited ranger force, has resulted in an increase in resource crimes, including poaching and pot-hunting, which often go undetected until after the fact.

Public support for governmental natural area protection, cultural preservation, and outdoor recreation programs cannot be taken for granted. The National Park Service must, as its highest priority, strive to further protect and preserve our nation's natural and cultural heritage resources. This effort should not come solely from the concerns of citizens or groups within the Park Service. Public support of all environmental and cultural laws must be reflected in budget and staffing allocations. Parks, and what they represent, are not guaranteed future protection.

Demographics: What Does the Changing Face of America Mean for Parks in the 21st Century?

Several demographic facts face the National Park Service as it enters the 21st century: the aging pattern of the population, both the baby boomers and their offspring; immigration and an increasing proportion of ethnic populations; and geographic relocation of people in the United States.

Park visitation will be affected significantly by the aging of the baby boomer population, and during the next 15–25 years the percentage of senior citizens in this country will sharply increase. This will be a long-term trend, and as the boomer population approaches 65, their children will be producing the highest number of births ever achieved in the United States. With increased life-expectancies, many baby boomers will still be alive when their own children reach retirement age.

Profound demographic changes are taking place in the United States in terms of immigration and ethnic populations. With its current growth rate, the population in the United States will double in about 75 years. Half of the nation's growth will come from recent immigrants and their children. Trends indicate that minorities, including American Indians, African-Americans, Hispanics, Asians, and Pacific Islanders, will collectively exceed the Anglo population sometime during the next century. This is an important issue because parks have historically been used mainly by the white middle class segment of the population, and many parks lack the ability to attract and offer park experiences that are meaningful to visitors from varied ethnic backgrounds, or have not yet made their park values relevant to them.

A lot of park visitation is regional in nature, particularly at urban parks, and where people choose to live or relocate will affect visitation trends. An overall trend is that large numbers of white middle class and upper-middle class people are moving out of major metropolitan areas, especially in California and along the East Coast. Another trend is for major urban metropolitan areas along the eastern seaboard, California, and south Florida

to experience an increase in minority populations. Parks that provide recreational opportunities and are near major urban centers will continue to receive high levels of visitation by people who cannot afford to travel to farther destinations. During the first half of the 1990s, attendance at national historical parks and memorials has increased because many of these areas are in or near urban areas. Multiday vacation trips to parks are on the decline, and weekend trips are on the rise.

As park visitation in the future reflects these demographic trends, the National Park Service must be prepared to meet the needs of increasing numbers of ethnic and elderly populations. The National Park Service should take trends into consideration when deciding on visitor services and amenities. More facilities in or near parks will be needed to keep pace with increasing visitation, particularly in urban areas. Elderly visitors, many with mobility impairments, will require more vehicle campsites, RV hookups, and easier access to park activities and features. Communicating park values to ethnic groups will require new skills, including multilingual programs and activities beyond park boundaries. External programs, as a means to communicate NPS values and resource importance, will become more important than ever before.

Outdoor Recreational Trends: What is Coming Down the Pike for Post Baby Boomer Use of Parks

At the same time that the National Park Service is managing park units to accommodate aging baby boomers, it faces an equally important challenge: providing recreational activities for the children of baby boomers (those born between 1964 and 1981).

Children of baby boomers have been commonly referred to as generation X. There is a general stereotypic perception that they are more likely to watch Music Television (MTV) than engage in outdoor recreational activities. Actually, research indicates that this group participates in outdoor recreation to about the same extent that their parents (the baby boomers) did when they were the same age. However, the activities differ greatly. As young adults, baby boomers went backpacking, cross-country skiing, and hunting, while present-day young adults mountain bike, rock climb, and kayak. Since there are fewer individuals in generation X compared to baby boomers, generation X has not produced the demand for outdoor recreation that the baby boomers did; however, generation X appears to be continuing the trend that was started by the baby boomers — more frequent short trips and fewer long vacations. This places an increased premium on close-to-home recreation.

Children born after 1981 are often referred to as the millennial generation. This group is made up of the children who are still in their formative years. Statistics on the leisure behavior of this group are just starting to become available. Initial indications are that young children are participating in outdoor activities at a 10%–20% lower rate than did the baby boomers and generation X when those individuals were of a comparable age. A declining proportion of Americans interested in the outdoors is a cause of concern for the National Park Service because it could affect future political support for park and recreation programs. Of greater concern is the fact that the millennial generation contains high proportions of ethnic and/or socioeconomically disadvantaged children. Most of these children live in inner cities, and most national parks are far away from their homes. Also, few educational programs teach them about the values of parks and the value of history.

Instead of concentrating efforts on providing new recreational opportunities for generation X, a more productive focus for the National Park Service might be to focus attention on attracting the millennial generation to the nation's parks. If these children are to enjoy outdoor recreational activities, they must be reached at home with appropriate messages and programs through educational activities. Moreover, the quantity and quality of outdoor recreational opportunities in and near America's cities must be greatly improved in the near future.

The Changing Role of Federal Agencies: Politics, Partnerships beyond Boundaries, and the Federal Budget — Looking Forward to the Year 2003

Budget pressures and increased public expectations about government continue to reshape the culture and operations of the National Park Service and other federal agencies. By necessity, innovations and efficiencies are being sought and adopted, even those that require some investment to implement. Partnerships are becoming a necessity for parks. While most of the money required to operate the parks will continue to come from appropriations, partnership groups who generate funds to meet park needs are becoming more important.

Local governments and community groups, acting as partners, are increasingly involved in cooperative planning efforts with the National Park Service. These partners want the parks to be protected to the highest standards, and they may be the best defense against those who would exploit parks for personal gain.

Reservations have become common in popular parks to avoid overcrowding, resource damage, and overload on the infrastructure. Public opinion surveys indicate that this limitation will be accepted by the public if the reasoning is adequately explained. The need to make reservations is likely to increase the value that people place on parks. Reservations, however, could exacerbate local tensions by limiting visitation and thereby slowing nearby economic growth. The National Park Service must learn how to create effective partnerships, building on shared values and identifying common goals.

As more and more natural areas are developed, parks will become increasingly rare and valuable. Conserving our national heritage will become even more important, and the parks will be an even more valued component of American life. While this support gives the National Park Service more influence on the national scene, it comes at the price of greater scrutiny. Principled, defensible decisions that put resource protection first are essential to winning public confidence and support and to increasing the Park Service's ability to better deflect political pressures.

NPS Internal Issues: Organizational Change and the Reinvention of the National Park Service

Many internal and external social and economic concerns are influencing the National Park Service, requiring it to change its organizational structure, to streamline its processes, and in effect to reinvent itself. Change in and around the National Park Service is taking many forms and contexts.

With the political goal of eliminating the federal budget deficit in the next seven years, the National Park Service is being reduced to levels of funding inadequate for essential operations and maintenance. During the next several years the National Park Service will have to cut back on programs and activities, including some that are symbolic of the national park experience (such as campfire programs), if they are to be funded from federal sources. Only the most urgent long-term, big-ticket resource preservation initiatives and the maintenance of critical infrastructure will take place during this period, and these functions will invariably relate to the most sacred and nationally spotlighted resources. Most parks will continue to conduct limited resource management and resource preservation programs, which will have to be squeezed out of very tight operations and maintenance budgets.

The National Park Service and other agencies not dealing directly with job creation and economic growth will face a continuing series of difficult decisions. In many cases these management decisions will defer help for one park or program in favor of another. Without the means to provide services and protect resources, some NPS functions may be curtailed.

The National Park Service must complete the reinvention that it has begun. The Park Service has seen progress in the delegation of authority, but it has not yet achieved balance between institutional direction and guidance on the one hand, and the localization of implementation authorities and flexibilities on the other. As a result, gaps and gray areas of indecision and inconsistency remain in carrying out policy, a situation frustrating to both parks and central offices. Because the National Park Service is in the midst of reorganization, it has become vulnerable to assaults on the parks themselves — particularly when the inconsistent application of policies from park to park opens basic NPS policies to attack.

The redistribution of power is intended to create a new and improved basis for informed institutional decision making, with park superintendents empowered to better manage the National Park Service/public interface with their constituents. Clear policy, properly administered, is the manager's best support during troubled times. The exercise of program authority must be a joint venture between the Washington Office, the field areas, and individual parks so that policy concerns, strategies, and tactics are aligned. Managers cannot afford to experiment with the basic legal and policy authorities that guide the National Park Service. When the reorganization is completed, the flexibility at the park level that makes regulation and policy more compatible with local conditions and constituencies will be in place. And in those parks where difficulties remain, law and policy administered from the Washington Office and the field area offices will provide superintendents with the objective support needed to ensure the integrity of park resources and values.

Also, the National Park Service must continue streamlining work processes: it must emphasize the need to share resources among units and to recognize and reward sharing, and it must obtain more flexibility in establishing partnerships and cooperative agreements with outside organizations. The National Park Service must ensure a diverse and demographically balanced workforce. It also must look at creative ways to retrain staff affected by the reorganization so that their technical skills are adequately used.

The challenge that faces the National Park Service is not small: it must build an operational base that combines the delegations and interactive organization envisioned by the restructuring plan, it must develop the ability to live within severely curtailed budgets, it must learn to improve and streamline its work processes, and it must seek to involve its partners in carrying out its mission. Anything less will risk all that has been invested and all the potential good that is yet to come from this organization.

The National Park Service and American Communities: Partners in Conservation and Recreation

The National Park Service is best known to the public through its individual units — 369 places where visitors can hike majestic mountain trails, explore Civil War battlefields, or appreciate the inventions of an Edison. However, the work of the National Park Service extends far beyond park boundaries. Starting in the mid-1960s, the National Park Service received broadened authority to extend its helping hand to communities, regardless of their proximity to park units. The clear mission: whether inside or outside of parks, cultural and natural resources are all part of the nation's heritage.

NPS historic preservation partnerships are administered in collaboration with the states, other federal agencies, American Indian tribes, nonprofit organizations, and commercial enterprises. They provide financial and technical assistance to governments and the private sector to help protect community character and revitalize community economies. Just one program, NPS preservation tax credits, has leveraged more than $17 billion in private investment in more than 26,000 historic building projects since 1977. The tax credit program and others like the National Register of Historic Places, National Historic Landmarks Program, Historic Preservation Fund grants, Tribal Historic Preservation Program, Archeology and Ethnography Program, and the Historic American Buildings Survey/Historic American Engineering Record help the National Park Service bolster community preservation efforts nationwide.

A new NPS partnership with other governmental agencies and the private sector to enhance the quality of life in urban and rural areas is the Empowerment Zone and Enterprise Community Initiative. The NPS role in this initiative will see that cultural and natural resource assets are integrated into economic development activities and infrastructure constructed in harmony with nature's demands. Moreover, the National Park Service supports Job Corps, Americorps, and similar state and local programs that benefit both people and environments in need of help.

Other NPS partnership programs help communities conserve precious resources and enhance outdoor recreational opportunities. Matching grants are made through state governments to local communities for the acquisition, development, and rehabilitation of recreation and conservation sites. The National Park Service plays a critical leadership role in several partnership efforts that cross federal agency lines. These efforts benefit American communities and community enhancement groups. In the pursuit of livability, revitalization, and sustainability for America's communities, the potential for NPS partnering is virtually unlimited.

Research in the Parks: Effective Management Needs a Knowledge Base Derived from Research

One of the distinguishing features of park resources is that they are genuine — created naturally or intentionally by humans for purposes other than becoming parks. As the resources preserved in the nation's parks become more unusual or scarce through the passage of time, cultural changes, or loss of natural systems elsewhere, their research value and significance will increase and become more evident to society.

Much NPS research attention is focused on the preservation of our tangible resources. Less attention is focused on the knowledge that can be derived from those same resources. Management-focused research is directed at solving a particular resource problem, while knowledge-focused research is directed at understanding more about the resource. Both kinds of research are needed.

Currently, not enough is known about the condition of most resources. Resource base inventories to collect scientific data about park resources have not been conducted uniformly throughout the system. If the National Park Service is to increase its knowledge of park resources, understand how its resources relate beyond park boundaries, and know how to allocate diminishing preservation dollars, it must incorporate sound research practices into park management. The ultimate success of the National Park Service in protecting and preserving the nation's parks will depend on the availability of credible scientific and scholarly information on which to make informed management decisions.

The 1994 *NPS Strategic Plan* articulated a desired future condition that

> NPS staff includes highly professional and nationally recognized scientists and scholars who maintain extensive professional partnerships with their counterparts in other scientific, academic, and cultural institutions. These mutually beneficial relationships ensure that quality research forms the basis for NPS preservation, planning, and educational programs and that this knowledge is broadly shared with the public.

The perspective of the National Park Service in this regard has not changed. The National Park Service must learn about the resources to fulfill its preservation mission, and it must learn from them to know and interpret who we are as American people. The responsibility for preserving park resources is immense. Mediocrity in research programs and preservation efforts is, quite simply, unacceptable.

Conducting Park Business While Responding to Rapid Changes and Flat Budgets

There is a crisis facing the National Park Service. Its ability to effectively carry out its dual mission of resource preservation and visitor use is being affected. It has become apparent that the necessary human and fiscal resources are no longer available to meet the optimum standards for most NPS programs.

Internal and external influences are increasingly affecting park resources. Downsizing and reorganization have substantially reduced central office support to parks. Delegations of authority have put more responsibility at the park level, further impinging on limited human and fiscal resources.

The National Park Service has survived difficult times in the past and must rely on that experience to get through these lean times and improve over the long term. For example, at the end of World War II the National Park Service was limited to a small custodial staff; resource management was neglected, some resource exploitation had been permitted for the war effort, the budget was small, and the public was discovering the parks by automobile. The National Park Service chose to stick to the fundamentals of its mission. Work was limited to only necessary tasks, with no apology and little remorse for the things left undone. The credo was a single paragraph from the 1916 NPS organic act:

> to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wild life therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations

What park resources and the visiting public received during that time was a mission-focused, dedicated park staff who accomplished the most essential tasks well. Old-timers today maintain that this was a time when all NPS employees felt essential and integral to the operation and maintenance of the public's national parks. In this lean time the National Park Service must look to its mandate and mission goals for a clear focus on the fundamental, essential tasks at hand. The National Park Service can no longer do more with less.

The NPS Role in American Education: Real Perspectives from Real Places

As early as 1906, Congress in the Antiquities Act recognized the government's role of using public lands to increase public knowledge. The National Park Service's first director, Stephen T. Mather, believed that "one of the chief functions of national parks and monuments is to serve educational purposes."

The Historic Sites Act of 1935 explicitly directed the National Park Service to "develop an educational program and service." The national park system has been called the nation's greatest university without walls. While the National Park Service has long recognized its educational role, education is now receiving increased prominence. The National Park Service has an obligation to the American people to share its natural laboratories and historic objects — to use its parks as classrooms. Helping people understand the complexity of the land and its history will support the fundamental mission of the National Park Service and increase support for the preservation of the mission.

The opportunities and methods for increasing education using the resources of the national park system are truly bountiful. These authentic resources — the ancient masonry walls at Hovenweep, the Kemp's Ridley sea turtles at Padre Island, the loons at Voyageurs, the moose heads at Theodore Roosevelt's Sagamore Hill, the goat herd at Carl Sandburg, the Russian Bishop's home at Sitka, the Grand Canyon, and the Statue of Liberty — help us understand the diverse aspects of this nation's natural and cultural resources. Such education is resource-based within the appropriate ecosystem or cultural context. While education is site-specific to the resources, it must also relate to systemwide themes. Habitat management must be taught within the larger context of an ecosystem, battles must be taught and understood within the larger societal context of wars and conflicts. Improving the National Park Service's educational success requires a changed attitude, one that is mindful of the educational importance of parks and their resources to our citizens and their everyday lives. A changed attitude also means increased outreach and interaction with educational institutions at all levels, broadening the intellectual enrichment of all. Such greater interaction, already begun, must include strong relationships with

academia at individual parks as well as servicewide. Textbook publishers and educators who develop classroom curricula (*Parks as Classrooms*) can also use these authentic resources to teach about our rich national heritage. Using current and emerging technology (satellite up-links, the Internet, CD-ROM) can bring knowledge and appreciation of NPS resources to millions of Americans, whether they visit parks or only learn about parks through the media. Working with video and broadcasting to improve the quality of programs about parks will also extend the national preservation and environmental ethic.

In addition, the National Park Service must reach out to communities across the nation as a partner in education. Using the lessons learned in our parks, the National Park Service must engage with others who wish to share with the public the knowledge and excitement of these natural and cultural places. Parks are not isolated islands, they are a small part of the larger ecosystem and only a part of American history. NPS educational efforts must reflect this interconnection by participating in the regional efforts of other educators.

For many years the National Park Service emphasized visitor interpretation rather than education, with information and entertainment sometimes being considered more important than learning. In actuality, interpretation both overlaps and complements more formal and intensive education. Having an integrated, professional, quality educational program sponsored by the National Park Service that is accessible and exciting to its participants and that functions at the different levels of knowledge and interests that participants and visitors bring will always be a challenge. The resources themselves, the knowledge about them, and the ability to communicate with the public through appropriate techniques are all critical elements in any NPS educational approach. In reality, NPS employees are teachers — teachers in special places where tangible resources help visitors understand the intangible ideas that the resources represent.

The NPS Role in International Assistance to Other Park Systems

The National Park Service receives many requests for specialized international technical assistance from park and conservation agencies and organizations who are interested in top-quality training, partnership continuity and loyalty, and successful cooperative results. The National Park Service's most successful international products have been park planning assistance; program evaluation assistance; exchange of technical information; international training programs, including interpretive skills training; and conferences, workshops, and symposiums.

Although the National Park Service has maintained a modest base of appropriated funding for international activities, supplemented by substantial external funding, current levels of NPS funding for international activities are being cut, affecting the National Park Service's ability to fund international programs.

The number of international visitors continues to rise in America's national parks. This increase is creating new management issues such as linguistic and cultural barriers. Contractors to the U.S. Information Agency and the U.S. Agency for International Development frequently contact the NPS Office of International Affairs to request that it receive and make schedules for foreign delegations; provide, or arrange for, briefings about operations, management, and a variety of other technical and substantive issues; and assist visitors in one or more parks. Parks are also independently requested by these contractors to accommodate international visitors. Although considerable staff time and resources are devoted to assisting the contractors with their foreign delegations, the National Park Service does not receive compensation from these agencies or their contractors.

In a cultural sense, borders do not really separate countries or act as barriers. The sharing of cultural and natural resources can unite populations that are separated by borders. The hope of the National Park Service for international assistance is to do as well as it has or better in the face of declining funding, while always recognizing that there is much to be learned from the professionals working in the park systems that request its help. International assistance should be a two-way exchange of knowledge, experience, technology, and training with resource protection and preservation as the common goal.

Operational Process

The operational process envisioned by the National Park Service to achieve the mission goals can be described as two parallel constructs. One construct is at the servicewide level and provides the overall NPS pathway for reporting on the degree of achieving performance measures. The second construct is at the park/program/central office level, which allows reporting up through the unit for information that is to be aggregated servicewide.

The servicewide direction contained in the mission goals and long-term goals serves two purposes. First, by keeping the mission goals in both of these constructs, the mission orientation from the long-term to the annual is maintained. Second, a proposal at the annual level must contribute to satisfying long-term and mission goals. If a proposed action does not contribute the achievement of a long-term or mission goal, then it would not be appropriate to the unit or the National Park Service.

Government Performance & Results Act Operational Process Within The National Park Service

Servicewide	Park/ Program/ Central Office
NPS Mission Statement	Unit Mission Statement
NPS Mission Goals	Unit Mission Goals
NPS Long-term Goals	Unit Long-term Goals
NPS Annual Goals	Unit Annual Goals
NPS Annual Performance Plan	Unit Annual Performance Plan
NPS Annual Performance Report	Unit Annual Performance Report

Program Assessment and Evaluation

The following is an overview of the process that the National Park Service is using to assess the current situation in the 369 park units in the system and the partnership programs in which the National Park Service cooperates. The process assists in developing mission statements, mission goals, long-term goals, annual goals, and annual work plans for the organization as a whole, as well as the individual parks and formal partnership programs. The NPS mission was defined in the 1916 organic act and subsequent legislation, but most of the parks were created through particular legislation and executive orders and have specific missions of their own (purpose and significance).

This *Strategic Plan* for the National Park Service is the culmination of consultation with customers and stakeholders throughout the country. This plan reflects the results of the 1994 *NPS Strategic Plan* and the 1991 *National Parks for the 21st Century: The Vail Agenda*. It also shares many similarities with the National Park Service's 1963 *Long Range Plan.*

The following eight-step process was developed to provide an initial assessment and evaluation of performance management needs for the parks and programs. The process uses a "why, what, and how" model.

WHY DO WE WANT TO ACCOMPLISH SOMETHING?

Step 1: National Park Service Mission and Goals

Review the servicewide mission goals from this *Strategic Plan* as a starting point for developing park and program goals consistent with the servicewide plan.

Step 2: Park / Program Mission

Establish the purpose and significance of the specific park or partnership program to determine its particular mission. Purpose refers to the specific

reasons the park or national assistance program was established; significance describes a park or partnership area's distinctive resources or values, why they are important within a national or international context, and why they contribute to the purpose of the park or program.

WHAT DO WE WANT TO ACCOMPLISH?

Step 3: Mission Goals

Develop park or program mission goals. Mission goals represent the ideal condition that the organization wants to attain or maintain and must reflect the servicewide goals reviewed in step 1; elaborate on the particular purpose and significance of the park or program as determined in step 2. These goals must focus on results, not efforts — on conditions, not strategies. They must be expressed in terms of desired future conditions ("What would success look like?"). The distinguishing characteristic of a particular success may be developed into a useful performance measure.

Step 4: Long-Term Goals

Determine long-term, outcome-related performance goals and associated performance measures. Long-term performance goals represent the outcomes to be achieved over the foreseeable future, roughly 5 years, with a range of 3 to 20 years depending on the particular long-term goal. As essential components to the mission goals, performance goals and measures must focus on results, not efforts, and must be expressed in terms of desired future conditions. These goals are to be expressed in measurable (quantifiable) terms, with firm performance targets (level of accomplishment) and dates to be completed.

Once realistic long-term performance goals have been identified, the appropriate performance measures need to be chosen. The following must be considered when determining the best performance measure for a performance goal: (1) Do any legal requirements, policies, regulations, or

broadly accepted standards apply? (2) What are the needs and wants of customers, stakeholders, and partners? (3) What guidance is provided by the best available scientific or academic research?

Step 5: Assess the Status Quo

Parks and partnership programs need to know the current status of resources to guide future actions. What is the current availability of funding and staffing? What is the condition of the park/program resources to be preserved and the visitor services available now? This analysis will provide a context for determining what reasonably can be done and will help schedule outputs (the products and services) needed to achieve the goals.

HOW DO WE PLAN TO ACCOMPLISH IT?

Step 6: Annual Goals and Plan

Develop an annual plan that identifies the annual performance goals (outcomes) for that year, the outputs (products and services) needed for success, and the inputs (staffing and funding) required to achieve them. The annual plan links outcome-related performance goals to specific outputs and inputs for a single year. This step identifies how much of a long-term goal can reasonably be expected to be accomplished in one year. Annual performance goals must clearly show their relationship to the long-term goals. Annual work plans then specify the actions to be taken so that the NPS products and services (outputs) will further the annual goal.

Step 7: Do the Work

Allocate resources and perform the work. Parks and programs receive budget allocations and update performance goals to reflect funding and staffing, and performance plans are implemented over the course of the year.

FEEDBACK: DID WE ACCOMPLISH WHAT WE INTENDED?

Step 8: Monitor and Evaluate Performance

Monitor and evaluate performance and provide feedback and reports. Performance is to be monitored using the NPS performance measures. Results are to be evaluated by comparing them with goals. Subsequent annual goals and long-term goals will be adjusted as necessary. Did the year's results meet the annual performance goals? Were the goals reasonable? Were the measures appropriate? Did the activities produce the desired products and services? The results are to be recorded using measures that best indicate performance at the local level, as well as those measures that inform the public about the National Park Service.

Performance Measures

The 369 units of the national park system have more than 20 separate classifications that demonstrate the system's diversity, including national park, historical park, monument, battlefield, river, recreation area, seashore, and parkway. In addition, the National Park Service is responsible for many valuable partnership programs of support, assistance, and cooperation separate from the units of the national park system.

A set of common performance measures has been identified to establish a basis for all parks and partnership programs to report their results. Measuring outcomes (annual results) poses various challenges for the National Park Service, which has a variety of natural and cultural resources and recreational opportunities and only partial control over the results. The National Park Service is more familiar with measuring inputs (funding and staffing) and outputs (products and services such as the number of visitor programs or the miles of road plowed). Outcomes help the National Park Service show the value it creates for the American people.

Performance measures that directly relate to the health of natural and cultural resources and that are useful, cost-effective, and currently available have been difficult to develop. The management of natural and cultural resources has often been limited to managing change by controlling impacts. The underlying assumption of managing for change is that by controlling impacts on the resources, they are preserved for future generations. Although much work has been accomplished in understanding impacts and their control, research methodology that can definitively evaluate the actual condition of natural and cultural resources is inadequate. Indirect indicators of resource health have been used to determine resource condition.

In addition to the mandate requiring that resources be preserved and protected, the National Park Service also has the responsibility of managing those resources so that people can enjoy them. The National Park Service has surveyed park visitors and studied park use trends for many years to provide facilities and services that meet visitor needs and preferences. Program evaluation will require additional visitor surveys to evaluate visitor satisfaction with NPS services and facilities.

National Park Service Consultations in Developing this Strategic Plan

Consultations with key committees of Congress were conducted in August 1995 and June 1996.

Public meetings to solicit comments on the *Strategic Plan* were held in San Francisco, Denver, and Washington, D.C., in October 1995.

Ten thousand public questionnaires were distributed to stakeholders and employees in November 1995. The 20% return rate provided valuable input for producing this document. Analysis of the questionnaires was compiled in the booklet *What Americans Think*.

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This document was prepared with the contributions of many NPS employees, members of the GPRA Taskforce, and members of the NPS National Leadership Council.

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As the nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has responsibility for most of our nationally owned public lands and natural resources. This includes fostering sound use of our land and water resources; protecting our fish, wildlife, and biological diversity; preserving the environmental and cultural values of our national parks and historical places; and providing for the enjoyment of life through outdoor recreation. The department assesses our energy and mineral resources and works to ensure that their development is in the best interests of all our people by encouraging stewardship and citizen participation in their care. The department also has a major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in island territories under U.S. administration.

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